
DANGER AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT
ENTRY SERVICES
PRACTICE AND FACES.NET TIP SHEET

Original Creation Date: January 14, 2016
Updated Date: October 5, 2020

The purpose of the SDM Danger and Safety Assessment is to help assess whether any child is likely to be in imminent danger of serious harm/maltreatment, and to determine whether a safety plan can be created to provide appropriate protection from that danger or if the child needs to be removed from the home.

The Danger and Safety Assessment is a household focused assessment through which workers arrive at an individual decision for each child.

Section 1: Entry Services Practice

What is the Danger and Safety Assessment (DAS)?

- The Danger and Safety Assessment (DAS) is a HOUSEHOLD-based assessment that you will use to assess the IMPACT the CAREGIVER is having on the child. It informs what you are worried about and helps you determine if the child stay safely in the home.
- You ultimately reach an assessment decision for EACH CHILD in that household

When is the DAS used?

- The initial DAS should be completed on all open CPS referrals at first contact with the child and caregiver and documented in FACES.NET within 24 hours.
- If circumstances have changed within the family to include any additions or deletions to the household, you will be required to complete another DAS.
- Links and Institutional Abuse Investigations do not require a DAS.

How is a DAS initiated?

- You must develop a household in FACES.NET that includes the caregivers and the children that reside in the home.

If the child is a member of two households, on which household does the DAS need to be completed?

- The initial DAS must be completed on the household where the child lives most of the time.
- If the child lives 50/50 in 2 households, you should consult with your supervisor to determine if both households should be assessed. NOTE: One DAS cannot be applied to multiple households.

What prompts me to consider safety planning with a family?

- If there are any danger indicators present for any child in the household, you will proceed with identifying *Considerations for Safety Planning* which will help determine if a temporary safety plan is needed to protect the child and address the dangers while allowing the family to remain intact.

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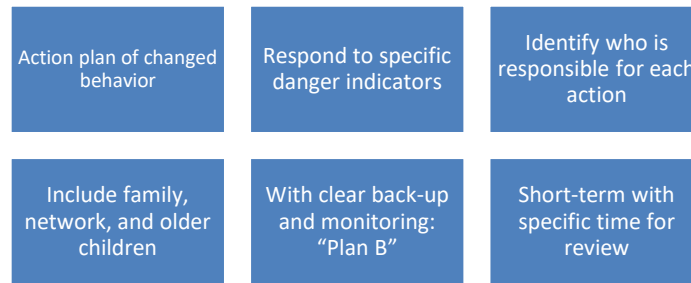


Figure 1

How many Assessment Decisions can be made and what are they?

- There are 3 Assessment Decisions:
 - SAFE: No Dangers exist. No safe interventions are required
 - SAFE WITH A PLAN: Danger indicators exist; a safety plan has been created with the family to address the danger while the family remains intact.
 - UNSAFE: As least one child has been found to be unsafe; 1 or more danger indicators are present that can't be controlled by a safety plan. – A REMOVAL HAS OCCURRED.

What if the DAS shows the family to be *safe with a plan*?

- If it is determined from your initial DAS that your family is *safe with a plan*, then you must meet with the family and conduct another DAS to determine if the danger is resolved.
- The Investigation CANNOT close if the DAS prior to closure determines that the family is *safe with a plan* unless the family is connected to an open case.
- The Family Assessment CANNOT close if the DAS prior to closure determines that the family is *safe with a plan* unless the referral is converted to Investigations.

What if I am unable to see a child... would I complete the DAS?

- NOT in its entirety. Complete the assessment on the other children in that household, then select **unable to assess** in FACES.NET for the child(ren) who could not be seen.
- There are six choices to consider when *unable to assess* is selected: Abscondence, Incarceration, Unable to Locate, Out of Jurisdiction, Emancipation, and Child Fatality

Who do I go to for support?

- If you have any questions about the tool or conducting the assessment, please talk to your supervisor or your program manager. If you have any questions about the functionality in FACES, please contact the FACES helpdesk.

Danger and Safety Assessment Flow

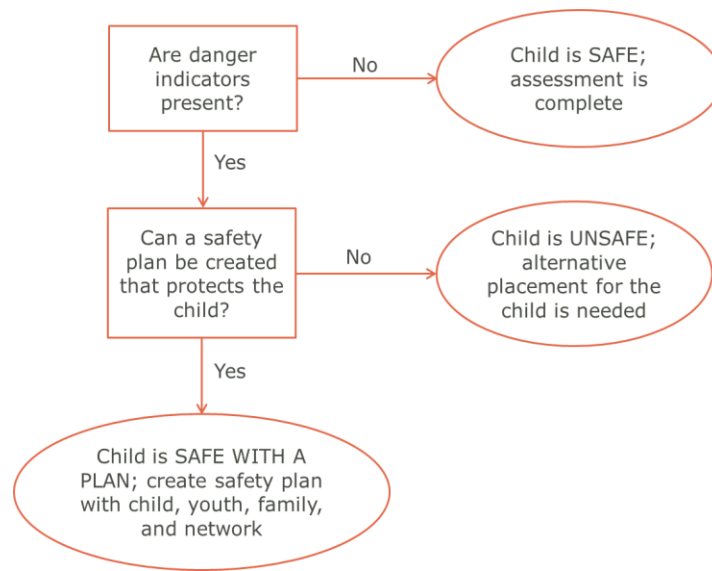


Figure 2

Section 2: FACES.NET

Pointers to Remember:

1. A Household must be created prior to completing the FACES.NET Danger and Safety Assessment.
2. Any changes made to the Household after approval of the Danger and Safety Assessment will invalidate the Assessment. A new Danger and Safety Assessment is required.
3. An Assessment Decision must be selected for each child.
4. If “Safe with a Plan” is selected, then a subsequent Danger and Safety Assessment must be completed. If the subsequent Assessment remains “Safe with a Plan”, the Referral can only be closed under the following conditions: 1) Link to an existing Referral 2) Link to a closed Referral and Reopen 3) Open a Case.

Danger and Safety Assessment:

Steps include:

Put Referral into focus

Step 1: Navigate from **Referral, Assessments, Danger and Safety Assessment, List of Assessments.**

Step 2: Select **Household.**

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Step 3: Click New.

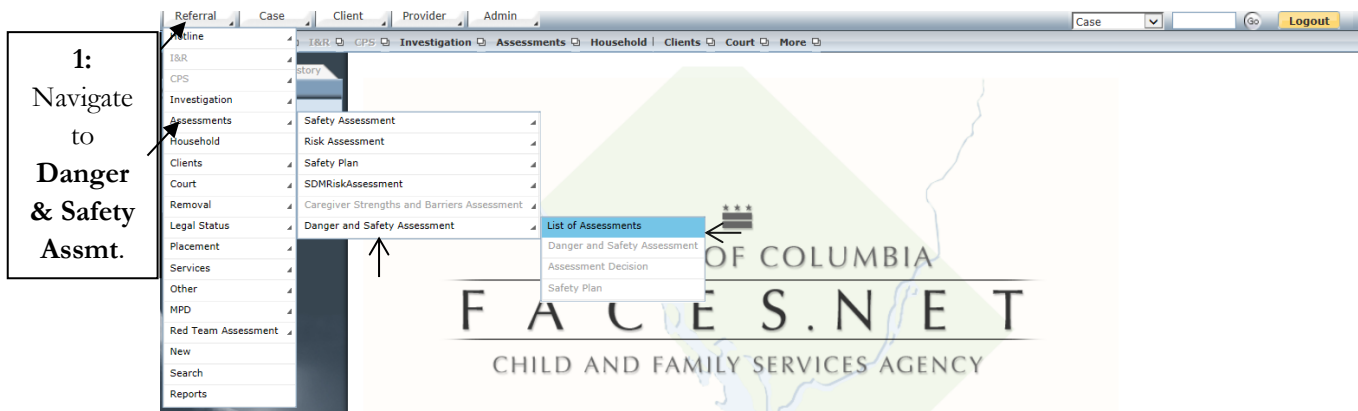


Figure 3

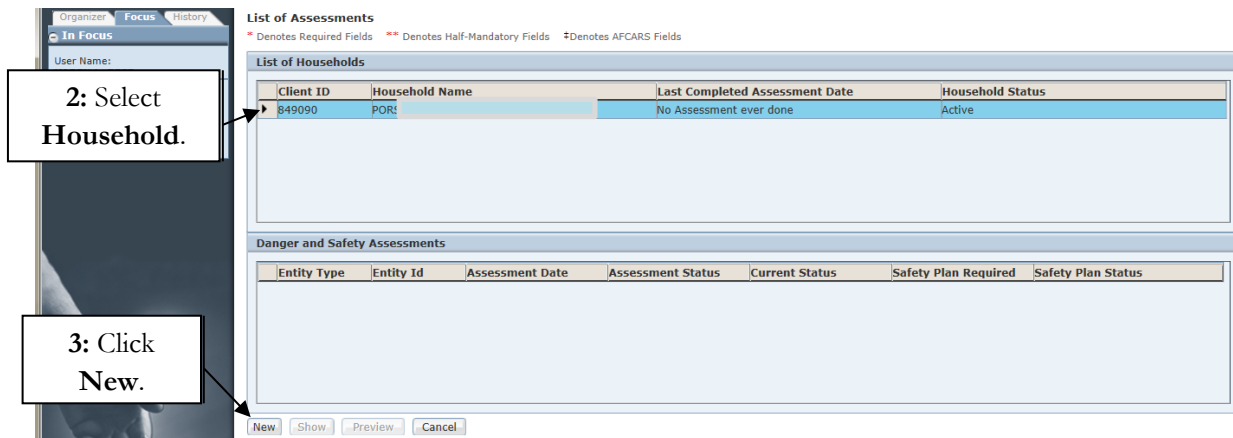


Figure 4



Note:

- If the last Assessment for the selected Household is not approved, “New” button is disabled.
- If the last Assessment for the selected household requires a safety plan and a safety plan is not yet approved, “New” button is disabled.
- If Investigation is closed, “New” button is disabled.

Step 4: Enter Assessment Date.

Step 5: Complete Assessment Questions and Select Client(s), as applicable.

Step 6: Enter Description of Danger Indicators.

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Step 7: Click Save.

4: Enter
Assessment Date.

5: Complete
Assessment
Questions
and Select
Client(s), as
applicable.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Danger Indicators' under the 'Considerations for Safety Planning' tab. At the top, there is a date field 'Assessment Date' set to 01/19/2016 and radio buttons for 'Assessment Type' (Initial, Reassessment, Closure). The form contains eight numbered questions with 'Yes' or 'No' radio buttons. Questions 1 through 6 have sub-selection checkboxes (e.g., 'Child has been seriously physically harmed by caregiver', 'Child has been seriously harmed due to lack of: Food, clothing, and/or shelter, Supervision, Medical or mental health care'). Questions 4 and 5 have text input fields for 'Other (Specify)'. Question 7 has a text input field for 'Other (Specify)'. To the right of each question is a 'Select Client' dropdown menu with checkboxes for 'CHRISTIA' and 'FAITH DE'. At the bottom, there is a 'Description of Danger Indicators' text area and 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Annotations with arrows point to the 'Assessment Date' field (Step 4), the first question (Step 5), the 'Select Client' dropdown for question 6 (Step 6), and the 'Save' button (Step 7).

6: Enter
Danger
Indicator
Description.

7: Click
Save.

Figure 5



Note:

- The Assessment Type will automatically be selected. However it can be changed if it's not the initial.
- If "No" is selected for each question the **Consideration for Safety Planning** tab will be disabled.
- The Description section is mandatory.
- If "Yes" is selected for any question then the applicable client(s) should be selected for that question.
- If "Yes" is selected for any question the **Consideration for Safety Planning** tab will be mandatory.
- The sub-selections are required for those questions that are marked "Yes".

Step 8: Complete **Consideration for Safety Planning** (if applicable).

Step 9: Enter **Description of Safety Planning Details** in the narrative field.

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Step 10: Click Save.

Assessment Date: 01/19/2016

Assessment Type: ☒ Initial ☐ Reassessment ☐ Closure

Danger Indicators **Considerations for Safety Planning**

The following areas should be assessed when workers and families are considering creating safety plans to address the dangers present in the household. Mark all that apply to the household and consider all items selected when making the safety decision.

Child Vulnerabilities
These conditions impact a child's ability to protect him/herself and can make it more difficult for a caregiver to protect a child. Mark all that apply to any child in the household.

- ☐ Child is age 0 to 6.
- ☐ Child has been exposed to multiple and/or seriously traumatic events.
- ☐ Child has diminished mental capacity (e.g., developmental delay).
- ☐ Child has diminished physical capacity (e.g., no ambulatory, limited use of limbs).
- ☐ Child has serious diagnosed medical or mental condition, including medically fragile.
- ☐ No child vulnerabilities.

Existing Household Safety
These are actions of protection, taken by at least one of the child's current caregivers or support network members, that have addressed the danger indicator selected above to some degree. Mark all that apply to the household.

- ☐ At least one caregiver articulates specific strategies that, in the past, have been successful in addressing the identified danger indicators AND has been using this strategy in the current situation.
- ☐ At least one caregiver has a stable support network that is aware of the danger indicator(s) AND is responding to those dangers by providing some protection for the child.
- ☐ Other (specify):
- ☐ No existing household safety actions have been taken.

Household Strengths
These are resources or conditions that increase the caregiver's likelihood or ability to create safety for the child but do not in and of themselves fully address the danger indicator(s). Mark all that apply to the household.

- ☐ Caregiver identifies and acknowledges the problem and danger indicator(s) and can suggest possible solutions.
- ☐ Caregiver has at least one supportive relationship with someone who is willing to be part of the support network.
- ☐ At least one no offending caregiver exists and is willing and able to protect the child from future harm.
- ☐ Caregiver is willing to work with the agency to address danger indicators, including allowing worker(s) access to child.
- ☐ Caregiver identifies and acknowledges the problem and danger indicator(s) and can suggest possible solutions.
- ☐ Caregiver has at least one supportive relationship with someone who is willing to be part of the support network.
- ☐ At least one no offending caregiver exists and is willing and able to protect the child from future harm.
- ☐ Caregiver is willing to work with the agency to address danger indicators, including allowing worker(s) access to child.
- ☐ Other (specify):
- ☐ There are no household strengths.

Household Complicating Factors
These are conditions that make it more difficult or complicated to create safety for a child; however, they do not create danger in and of themselves. Mark all that apply to the household.

- ☐ Substance use
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Coercive behavior and control
- ☐ History of serious or extensive child abuse/neglect
- ☐ Financial stresses
- ☐ Homelessness
- ☐ Teenager present in home is exhibiting extremely oppositional behaviors
- ☐ Current or history of incarceration/criminal activity
- ☐ Other (specify):
- ☐ There are no household complicating factors.

Description of Safety Planning Considerations
Describe the details and circumstances surrounding any of the above child vulnerabilities, existing household safety, household strengths, and household complicating factors found to be present in the household.

10: Click Save.

8: Complete Considerations for Safety Planning.

9: Enter Description of Safety Planning Considerations.

Save Cancel

Figure 6

Step 11: Click on the **Assessment Decision Screen**.

Step 12: Select a **Decision** for each child (Safe, Safe with a Plan, Unsafe, Unable to complete Assessment) and **Select Client(s)**, as applicable.

Step 13: Click Save.

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Step 14: Click **Approval** to request approval from Supervisor.

Step 15: Select **Request**.

Step 16: Click **OK**.

The screenshot shows a web-based 'Approval' form. At the top, there is a table with four columns: 'Requesting Worker', 'Request Date', 'Approving/Denying Worker', and 'Approve/Deny Date'. The 'Request Date' field is populated with 'Tuesday, January 19, 2016'. Below the table, there are input fields for 'Requesting Worker', 'Requesting Date' (pre-filled with 'Tuesday, January 19, 2016'), 'Approving Worker', and 'Approving Date'. A row of radio buttons follows, with 'Request' selected. Other options are 'Deny', 'Approve', and 'Send Back'. A 'Reason:' dropdown menu is to the right. Below these is a 'Comments:' text area. At the bottom left, there are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons. Two callout boxes are present: one labeled '15: Click Request.' with an arrow pointing to the 'Request' radio button, and another labeled '16: Click Ok.' with an arrow pointing to the 'OK' button.

Figure 8



Note:

- A decision has to be selected for each child.
- If “Safe with a Plan” is selected, at least one of the safety components must be selected. A description is also required in this section.
- If “Safe with a Plan” is selected and approved, the Safety Plan screen is required (*See Figure 9*).
- If “Unsafe” is selected, a subcategory must be checked and the child(ren) must be identified in that section.
- If “Unsafe” is selected with subcategories Kinship Placement, CFSA Foster Care Placement, Private Agency Foster Care Placement or Other, a child’s Home Removal Entry Date is required prior to requesting Investigation closure.
- If “Residence of other legal guardian” is selected a removal date is **Not Required**.
- The Assessment Decision must be approved prior to completing the Safety Plan (if applicable).
- If “Safe with a Plan” is selected, then a follow up Danger and Safety Assessment is required to close the referral or transfer to In-Home.
- Any changes made to the household after approval of the Danger and Safety Assessment will invalidate the Assessment. A new Danger and Safety Assessment is required.

Step 17: Complete **Safety Plan** Narratives (If applicable).

Step 18: Click **Save**.

Step 19: Click **Approval** to request approval from Supervisor.

anger and Safety Assessment | List of Assessments | Danger and Safety Assessment | Assessment Decision | **Safety Plan**

Safety Plan
 * Denotes Required Fields ** Denotes Half-Mandatory Fields †Denotes AF-CARS Fields

Safety Plan

1. What is the specific action or concern that caused the child(ren) to be unsafe? State so that everyone participating in the plan can understand what the concern is and which child(ren) it applies to.

2. What actions will be taken right now and by whom in order to keep the child(ren) safe?

3. Who is participating in the plan? List names and phone numbers.

4. What is the timeframe for this plan? When will it be reviewed?

17: Complete Safety Plan.

18: Click Save.

19: Click Approval.

Save Approval Preview Cancel

Figure 9

Step 20: Click Request.

Step 21: Click Ok.

anger and Safety Assessment | List of Assessments | Danger and Safety Assessment | Assessment Decision | **Safety Plan**

Safety Plan
 * Denotes Required Fields ** Denotes Half-Mandatory Fields †Denotes AF-CARS Fields

Approval

| Requesting Worker | Request Date | Approving/Denying Worker | Approve/Deny Date |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| | Tuesday, January 19, 2 | | |

Requesting Worker: [] Requesting Date: Tuesday, January 19, 2016

Approving Worker: [] Approving Date: []

☒ Request ☐ Deny ☐ Approve ☐ Send Back Reason: []

Comments: []

OK Cancel

20: Click Request.

21: Click Ok.

Save Approval Preview Cancel

Figure 10

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009
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Click the **Preview** button to view and print the Safety Plan Document.

File Edit View Window Help

Home Tools DangerAndSafetyPL... x

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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY**

SAFETY PLAN

1. What is the specific action or concern that caused the child(ren) to be unsafe? State so that everyone participating in the plan can understand what the concern is and which child(ren) it applies to.
Training

2. What actions will be taken right now and by whom in order to keep the child(ren) safe?
Training

3. Who is participating in the plan? List names and phone numbers.
Training

4. What is the timeframe for this plan? When will it be reviewed?
Training

(Primary Caretaker) _____ Date _____

(Social Worker) _____ Date _____

(Secondary Caretaker) _____ Date _____

(Supervisor) _____ Date _____

Figure 11



Note:

- Referral closure will be conditional based on safety decisions.
 - a. Safe - allow closure. No additional Danger and Safety Assessment needed.
 - b. Safe with a safety plan – follow up required (2nd DAS). For Investigation, case connect must have closure reason of **Opening a New Case/ Connect to an existing Case/Open a closed Case/ Link to an existing Investigation.**
 - c. Unsafe – removal expected in referral/case. No additional Danger and Safety Assessment required. A removal is expected for a client who is marked as unsafe. The referral cannot be closed unless a removal entry date has been entered.
 - d. Incomplete Investigations will require a Danger and Safety Assessment.

The following chart provides details regarding the link between the risk score and safety decision to determine the Case Connect recommended decision.

| Risk | Safety Decision | Recommended Decision |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Low/Moderate | Safe with Plan | Divert |
| High/Intensive | Safe with Plan | Open |
| Low/Moderate | Safe | No Further Action |
| High/Intensive | Safe | Open (Cannot Override) |
| Low/Moderate/High/Intensive | Unsafe | Open |
| Low/Moderate/High/Intensive | Unable to Access | No Case Connect Decision |

Figure 12

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